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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Washington, DC) – Today, Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) gathered in a press conference to challenge the U.S. Congress to put politics aside, aim for solutions that go beyond piecemeal and deportation only policies, and move forward a bipartisan effort to truly fix our broken immigration system.

Over the last several months, a failure to reach consensus on immigration reform has resulted in characterizing the CHC as the blockade to progress. In reality, for each of the last three consecutive congresses, the CHC has introduced comprehensive immigration reform that is more aggressive in its security and enforcement provisions than any other proposal on the table, provides businesses with the friendliest and most flexible worker program, and creates sustainable solutions for the undocumented already living and working in the United States.

As House committees prepare to hold hearings on piecemeal immigration legislation, the CHC emphasized to the public that comprehensive legislation already before congress -- the STRIVE Act, H.R. 1645 -- would more thoroughly address the security and labor concerns at hand. Members also reminded their colleagues that this bipartisan legislation is both realistic and attainable.

“Today, we come together to remind our critics of the reality. The CHC has been the leader in promoting realistic comprehensive immigration reform for many Congresses now, and has invited all sides to the table,” said Congressman Joe Baca, Chair of the CHC. “We are here to stand up for those who suffer at the hands of anti-immigrant rhetoric—immigrants, their families

and communities relying on them, as well as our nation's proud immigrant history."

"It is time for this Congress to acknowledge that piecemeal and band aid fixes will not sustain or protect our workforce, or cut off unauthorized border crossings or reduce visa overstays," said Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez, Chair of the CHC Immigration Task Force. "If we are serious about providing effective resources for our borders, about strengthening our economy, and about creating a system that requires people to register with the government and work here legally and safely and humanely, then comprehensive immigration reform is indeed the only sustainable solution."

Congresswoman Grace F. Napolitano, the Whip of the CHC, added, "There are thousands of immigrants loyal to the United States who serve with honor and distinction in our Armed Forces and the best way to honor their service is to ensure the safety of their wives, husbands and children who could be in danger if deported. We must not ask them to choose between remaining with their families and serving the country that they love."

"Our nation is paying a terrible price for our failure to reform our broken immigration system" said Congressman Rubén Hinojosa, CHC Education Task Force Chair. "Our indiscriminate enforcement-only approach is causing untold economic, environmental, and social damage. It is a departure from America's national values and tarnishes our standing in the world as a beacon of hope and freedom."

Congressman Solomon Ortiz added, "Discussions about border security should be a priority for Congress, but a comprehensive reform package that addresses the realities of the people and families already in our country must also be included. Trying to solve our nation's immigration debate piecemeal will only lengthen the issue and get us further from a constructive solution."

The STRIVE Act has 75 co-sponsors.

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